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or to believe it for the work's sake, are processes which in some sort include each other, and in their combined effect create the full confidence of faith. Yet, with a true disciple, the evidence of works is only a subsidiary aid: it is knowledge of Jesus in Himself which inspires an assured faith in His highest self-revelations."

Thomas Carlyle. By John Nichol [*English Men of Letters Series*]. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1892. 12mo, pp. viii., 257.

AFTER an interim of several years this valuable series has begun a new life in the volume before us, and it is to be hoped that no such break will shortly take place as that which has occurred since the publication of Sidney Colvin's "Keats." We are not informed as to the cause of a supersession which all students of English literature must regret—perhaps Mr. Morley's political preoccupations have interfered with his editorial labors—but we are glad to welcome without many questions this tardy bellwether of a new section of the flock.

Emeritus Professor Nichol is not unknown to the general reader. He is the author of the excellent life of Byron in this same series, and he has recently contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* an article which has not exactly pleased such Southerners as have read it. He was well qualified to write about Carlyle both from his personal knowledge of the man and his admiration for his work. Nevertheless he can hardly be said to have done his best by his subject. Indeed, those good people who will hear of nothing but a "*nil nisi bonum*" biography will be inclined to think that Mr. Nichol has done his worst by his subject. We will not say this, for we recognize many good points in Mr. Nichol's sketch, and we are well aware what a difficult task lies before the writer of any short biography, much less one of such a man as Carlyle. We are also prepared to believe that there is a time and a place for the critical as well as the encomiastic biography, and we see no reason why Carlyle should not be criticized afresh now

that Mr. Froude has done with him. Nor are we disposed to chide Mr. Nichol for following Froude closely in matters of fact and for adding little himself to our knowledge of details. Whatever may be thought of Mr. Froude's tact as a biographer, it was Mr. Nichol's clear duty to take into account all that had ever been published about his hero, and he assuredly was at liberty to defend in his preface the biographical methods of his personal friend.

We have two chief faults to find with Mr. Nichol. He has allowed his propensity to criticize to make him forget that he was writing a biography, and he has allowed the same propensity to blind him to the fact that it is sometimes well to be modest when one is in the presence of a great genius. In consequence, the book before us shows a want of proportion that makes it appear at times to be little more than a clumsy and long-spun essay, and it contains whole pages that are bound to be irritating to any admirer of Carlyle. If Mr. Nichol had Matthew Arnold's style, or if the shafts of his criticism were as well directed as those of the great Englishman were wont to be, the general reader would be prepared to forgive him, even if the true Carlylian still showed signs of rancor. But unfortunately Mr. Nichol's style is often involved and his criticisms are often superfluous, not to say pointless. Still one is forced to admit that the Scotch professor, if too fond of inculcating his own views, as all professors are, has nevertheless well characterized Carlyle's services to literature, especially to history, and that he has treated with tact such topics as the Lady Ashburton episode, which might well have been bungled by an injudicious biographer. It must also be allowed that Mr. Nichol shows at times a genuine admiration for Carlyle, which goes far to justify the existence of his book and which no student of Carlyle can afford to cavil at or to overlook. It is but simple justice to him to quote two or three admirable sentences from his concluding paragraph:—

“When all is said of his dogmatism, his petulance, his ‘evil behavior,’ he remains the master spirit of his time, its

Censor, as Macaulay is its Panegyrist, and Tennyson its Mirror. He has saturated his nation with a wholesome tonic, and the practice of any one of his precepts for the conduct of life is ennobling. More intense than Wordsworth, more intelligible than Browning, more fervid than Mill, he has indicated the pitfalls of our civilization. His works have done much to mould the best thinkers in two continents, in both of which he has been the Greatheart to many pilgrims."

London. By Walter Besant. With Illustrations. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1892. 8vo, pp. xv., 509.

THAT facile writer, Mr. Walter Besant, who is equally at home whether he is writing about Jerusalem or the East End of London, about Rabelais or the protection of struggling authors, about marriages in the Fleet or Sons of Vulcan, has certainly not fallen below his wonted plane of excellence in the volume before us. The nine chapters of which it is composed were originally contributed as articles to *Harper's Magazine*, and one is therefore not surprised to find occasional padding or traces of the effects of that impulse to write down to the level of the popular mind, which no veteran contributor to periodical literature can long escape. There are also traces of a slight flippancy natural enough in a successful and voluminous novelist, and there is too much laudation of our advanced nineteenth century civilization at the expense of those excellent ancestors whose labors made that civilization possible. Still Mr. Besant is not wanting in enthusiasm for these ancestors, and he not infrequently defends them against carping antiquaries. Then, too, he is not afraid to let his imagination play over the past of the London he loves, and so he not infrequently illuminates his subject. Besides, how could a charming and clever man like Mr. Besant fail to write a charming and clever book? He has not failed, very far from it.

Our author is careful to let his reader know in his preface